

Message

From: Story, Karen [Story.Karen@epa.gov]
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Region 2 News

NiMo site Superfund work begins this month (SARATOGIAN; November 2, 2018)

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Public Place Community Workshop: Some Opposition To The 100% Affordable Project (BKLYNER; November 2, 2018)

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Many mink appear to be missing along the Hudson River.

Hudson PCBs harming river mink populations (ALBANY TIMES-UNION; November 1, 2018)

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Making a federal case: Jeffries vows to fight for EPA Superfund status for Coney Island Creek (BROOKLYN DAILY; October 31, 2018)

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PUERTO RICO / VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Government officials have paid off a sizeable debt owed to the territory’s utility, a V.I. Water and Power Authority spokesman said Friday.

NATIONAL

The Hill: How to fight bad science infiltrating the EPA

DTN: Washington Insider – Friday

Climate Website:

The EPA Has Disappeared Its Climate Page

The Guardian: It's a ghost page': EPA site's climate change section may be gone for good

Newsweek: TRUMP'S EPA MAY HAVE SHUT DOWN IT'S CLIMATE CHANGE WEBSITE FOR GOOD

Environmental Working Group: Is EPA's Climate Change Website Gone for Good?

The Ring of Fire: The EPA's Climate Change Websites Have All Disappeared

E&E News: Trump admin halts update to climate site

Dicamba

Ecowatch: Trump's EPA Sides With Monsanto, Extends Dicamba 2 More Years

Emissions

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Region 2 News

SARATOGIAN

NiMo site Superfund work begins this month

By Paul Post

November 2, 2018

A Nov. 13 public information session is scheduled to discuss plans for a contaminated soil cleanup project near the intersection of Excelsior, Warren and High Rock Avenues.

Work slated to begin later this month will continue through next spring at the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation Superfund site, which was once used to manufacture gas from coal.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will explain project details at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 13 at the Excelsior Springs Event Center, 47 Excelsior Ave.

“Saratoga’s famed mineral springs have been a tourist attraction since the time of the Revolutionary War,” said EPA Regional Administrator Pete Lopez. “Our cleanup adds an extra level of protection of the deep aquifer supplying the Old Red Spring well.”

This is the second and final phase of cleanup at the site, which is contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds. Work will encompass a roughly half-acre area, which is comprised of a section of Excelsior Avenue, a small green space containing the Old Red Spring well and pavilion, and a section of an adjacent paved parking lot.

Excelsior Avenue will be closed to vehicular traffic between Rock Street and High Rock Avenue while construction work is ongoing. An electronic message board will notify the public of construction-related traffic detours.

Under EPA’s oversight, Niagara Mohawk will solidify and stabilize contaminated soil in the Old Red Spring area with a cement-like material. Niagara Mohawk will also install underground barriers to contain and isolate contaminated soil beneath Excelsior Avenue.

During the cleanup, care will be taken to preserve the integrity of the Old Red Spring well and pavilion, the EPA says.

The Old Red Spring well draws water from deep bedrock aquifer, which has not been impacted by contamination at the site. As an added level of aquifer protection, the well will either be retrofitted in-place by adding a new protective steel outer casing or replaced at a new nearby location with a double-casing.

Work on the Old Red Spring well may require temporary relocation of the Old Red Spring pavilion and will result in the well and pavilion being inaccessible to the public during cleanup.

Temporary chain-link construction fencing with a mesh-type screen will be installed around the perimeter of the work area.

Following construction, work areas will be restored. A site-specific health and safety plan and a community air monitoring program will be in place while the work is being performed.

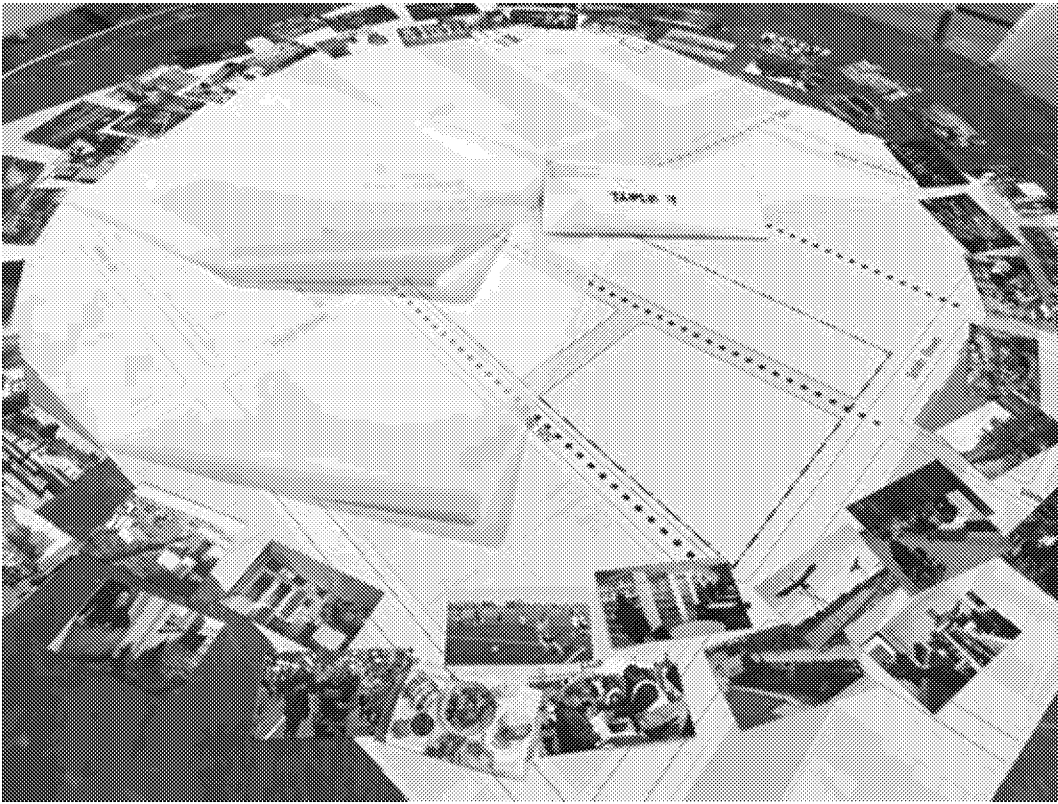
BKLYNER.

Public Place Community Workshop: Some Opposition To The 100% Affordable Project

By Pamela Wong

November 2, 2018

The NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) and the NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) hosted a Community Workshop Thursday night to collect feedback on the preliminary site planning for Public Place.



Public Place Community Workshop (Photo: Pamela Wong/BKLYNER)

Public Place is the largest city-owned site in Brooklyn Community District 6, occupying nearly six acres at the intersection of Smith and 5th Streets adjacent to the Gowanus Canal. Approximately four acres of privately-owned land just south of the site will also be developed as part of the overall project.

“This is a large site, about five and a half acres that HPD put out a request for proposals for back for in 2007,” explained Leila Bozorg, Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Strategies at HPD. The RFP sought a team for a mixed-use development on the underutilized ten acres of land that would include affordable housing, community facilities, commercial/retail space, and open space.

“We designated a development team in 2008 for a project that was called Gowanus Green at the time,” Bozorg said. That team consists of Hudson Companies, Jonathan Rose, Fifth Avenue Committee, and the Bluestone Organization. Some representatives of the team attended Thursday’s meeting “to listen to feedback and start thinking about how to incorporate that into future visions for the site,” Bozorg added.

“In 2008 the Gowanus Canal was nominated to be designated as a Superfund site because of the contamination,” Bozorg continued. “In 2010 the U.S. EPA officially designated it a Superfund site so that really put our plans for Public Place and Gowanus Green on pause. We feel a lot has changed since 2008 in the city and in Gowanus and that’s part of why we want to take a step back from the original vision for the site.”

Along with approximately two and a half acres of open space, the original Gowanus Green proposal included 770 units of housing—75% set aside for affordable units and 25% for market-rate apartments.

Noting the city’s population growth, significant changes in the real estate market, and “a much deeper and broader demand for affordable housing at a range of incomes,” Bozorg said the project will now provide 100% affordable housing, offering between 850 to 1,000 below-market units. “Feeling the effect of that affordability crisis in the city and in Gowanus specifically, we wanted to make sure that we are providing as much affordable housing as we can on some of these scarce public sites.”

To address the need for more school seats in District 15, another change to the original plan includes the possibility of adding a school on the site.

The gymnasium of PS 32 was set up with ten round tables equipped with maps of the site and props to be used in exercises. Facilitators were assigned to each table to discuss the six core goals of the development project:

- Support clean up and remediation of the site
- Create a sustainable, resilient, environmentally healthy community
- Build a network of parks and open spaces in Gowanus
- Create and preserve affordable housing for all people, especially those with the lowest incomes
- Support community and economic development for a thriving neighborhood
- Create an inclusive neighborhood that is integrated and accessible for all.

The facilitators also led participants through a series of exercises that focused on: what they want the site to provide (ample green space, employment opportunities, a creative/maker facility); the physical dimensions and site massing (e.g. building high in order to maximize green space); and uses for the open space (accessibility, connection to the waterfront, native plantings, historic interpretation, play areas, green roofs). [Note: these are only some of the responses from the table where BKLYNER sat.]

Participants placed photos showing various activities onto the map to show what types of amenities they'd like on the property and blocks were stacked to indicate how high and dense they'd like to see the development built.

The map included a proposed street network on the site to provide access and serve as view corridors. While many agreed that accessibility and views leading to the waterfront were important, they were opposed to allowing vehicular traffic on the site.

Another point of contention arose midway through the workshop when Joseph Alexiou unexpectedly addressed the crowd declaring that a contaminated Superfund site is not appropriate for housing.

"This is a multiple year legacy, since 1861 a manufactured gas petroleum [facility] dumped into this land. Remediation means removing some of it, not all of it. They can't afford to and would never remove all of it," he said. "Putting blocks in front of us is infantilizing. We do not need to have more residential housing beyond six stories.... Let's talk about reality. We haven't yet agreed to put residential stuff here. Let's talk about what the community needs most. Remediation is about putting there what is healthy and safe for the community, not putting affordable housing on a flood zone with a toxic waste site on top of it. That's not exactly taking care of your community, is it?"

Longtime Gowanus resident Linda Mariano, who stood with Alexiou as he spoke, told BKLYNER following the meeting that she refused to participate in the Community Workshop because "it's as phony as it can get."

"We want to protect our neighborhood," she said. "All we're asking is for the government to stop the greed and corruption and be honest," adding that she believes officials are "pretending it's okay to build housing" on the site when Public Place should be for public use only and including the affordable housing component as bait. "It is toxic," she says of the site. "It will forever be toxic."

"There is certainly serious contamination on this site from the MGP [manufactured gas plant] facility, as well as on many other sites in Gowanus," says Andrea Parker, Executive Director of the Gowanus Canal Conservancy. "However, no housing or public space is going to be built on the site until it is cleaned up, and there are multiple agencies on city, state and federal levels making sure this happens. While it's important for the community to stay abreast of the contamination concerns and continue holding our agencies accountable, it is also important to have productive community engagement about the future of the site after it is cleaned up."

While the EPA is cleaning the Gowanus Canal, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) is overseeing National Grid's cleanup of the Gowanus Green site.

In response to Mariano's argument that the site is reserved for public use, the site is called "Public Place" because that is how it appears on the [city map](#), according to DCP, however, there is no official definition for a "Public Place." The best description of a Public Place is a space that is reserved for a public purpose which is sometimes not clearly defined—that may or may not be zoned and may not generate development rights. They are typically established to allow for flexibility in use. Most areas designated as Public Places in NYC are used as public plazas. The term is not included in [DCP's zoning glossary](#).

Thursday's Community Workshop follows the [June release of DCP's Gowanus rezoning framework](#) that was developed after a year and a half of community members and stakeholders participating in more than 100 hours of workshops and [working group meetings](#) to provide feedback on how they'd like to see Gowanus reshaped. Yesterday's meeting was to coordinate public input with the current work happening on the broader Gowanus Neighborhood Plan slated to be completed by the end of the year.

The notes and photos from each table at Thursday's Community Workshop will be posted online. HPD and DCP plan to host another Community Workshop focusing on affordability and programming. The date and location for that meeting will be determined in the coming weeks.

GREENWIRE

[Drop in minks at Hudson River could be linked to PCBs](#)

November 2, 2018

Government trustees assessing harm to the Hudson River from polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) pollution say a study showing reduced mink populations along the waterway provides more evidence of contamination.

The peer-reviewed study commissioned by the Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees concludes that about 40 percent fewer minks live along the Hudson River than the Mohawk River. Researchers identified individual minks through DNA analysis of scat.

General Electric completed removal of 2.75 million cubic yards of sediment contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyls from the upper river in 2015 as part of a federal Superfund project.

The mink study was published this summer as the federal and state trustees assess GE's liability for harm done to the Hudson River's natural resources.

GE said the "limited" study does nothing to diminish the success of the river's cleanup. — *Associated Press*

WNYT NEWS CHANNEL 13

[Hudson River trustees say mink study points to pollution](#)

By Associated Press

November 2, 2018



A mink sniffs the air as he surveys a river beach in search of food. | Photo: AP Photo/Sergei Grits.

Government trustees assessing harm to the Hudson River from PCB pollution say a study showing reduced mink populations along the waterway provides more evidence of contamination.

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GLENS FALLS POST-STAR

Mink may be dying from PCB contamination

By KATHLEEN MOORE

November 2, 2018



Many mink appear to be missing along the Hudson River.

A new study, published this summer in Nature's Scientific Reports research journal, says the mink population is about 40 percent smaller along the Hudson than it is along the Mohawk River.

The multiyear study was commissioned by the Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees. The study authors concluded that PCB contamination was killing the mink near the Hudson River, saying that was the primary difference between the Hudson River habitat and the Mohawk River habitat.

The trustees may demand that General Electric pay to restore the mink population.

The trustees have steadily documented the "natural resource injuries" from GE's releases of PCBs into the river, in preparation for a demand for restoration. They have documented damages to snapping turtles, birds and bullfrogs.

Mink could be assisted with protected habitats along the river or by improving their access to uncontaminated food, water and sediment, the trustees said in a press release.

"Decades of PCB contamination continue to have severe and adverse effects on entire populations of animals, such as mink, in the Hudson River," said Kathryn Jahn, Department of the Interior's case manager for the Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment, in a statement. "Habitat and wildlife restoration, or land protection, by General Electric to help address this problem could begin at any time."

Trappers said they would not be surprised to learn that PCBs were killing off the mink. One wife of a local fur buyer noted that she had several fur coats — but not a mink coat, because mink is so rare.

But former Conservation officer and Argyle Supervisor Bob Henke cautioned about assuming the mink population was affected only by the PCBs.

"The big problem is winter feed. They eat a whole lot of muskrats out of their dens. If the muskrats are down, the mink are down," he said. "It's very hard to tell."

Still, he acknowledged that it is startling to see such differences in population between the Hudson and Mohawk rivers.

While mink do not eat many fish — which are so contaminated by PCBs that humans are advised not to eat them — he noted that mink do eat other animals that are known to be contaminated.

"There was a study that showed the birds are picking up PCBs and the mink do eat a lot of ground-nesting birds in the spring. So that may be a vector," Henke said. "That might be conceivable."

Researchers for the study spent two years searching for mink feces to determine the size of the mink population along both rivers. They used dogs to sniff out the feces, and then DNA analysis to identify each mink. They found 108 mink in the Hudson River habitat, compared to 208 mink in the Mohawk River habitat.

A previous study, in 2013, tested how mink react to PCBs by feeding PCB-contaminated food to captive mink. Baby mink died more often and adult mink developed lesions in their jaw bones that eventually caused their teeth to fall out.

Mark Behan of Behan Communications, who was hired by GE to respond to press inquiries about the PCB issue, disputed the conclusions in the study. He noted the PCB cleanup finished just three years ago and that PCB levels are falling.

"The Hudson River is an environmental success story," Behan said. "A limited study of comparative mink scat findings does nothing to diminish the success of the historic Hudson River cleanup that reduced PCB levels in sediment by 92% or the ongoing environmental recovery of the river as a whole. Indeed, all signs point to continued progress."

ALBANY TIMES-UNION

Hudson PCBs harming river mink populations

By BRIAN NEARING

November 1, 2018



A small, brownish weasel that spends much of its life in the water, hunting for fish and frogs, the American mink is a signal for the ecological health of where it lives.

Right now, the mink is not doing very well along the Hudson River, largely due to decades of PCB pollution from two General Electric plants in Washington County, according to a joint state and federal study released Thursday.

The study found the Hudson River has about 40 percent fewer minks living along it than the ecologically similar Mohawk River, and blamed that disparity on PCB contamination in the minks' diet, which inhibits fertility and increases mortality of young minks. Exposure to PCBs also causes health problems in minks, including jaw lesions and the loss of teeth, the study reported.

"Decades of PCB contamination continue to have severe and adverse effects on entire populations of animals, such as mink, in the Hudson River," said Kathryn Jahn, U.S. Department of Interior case manager for the Hudson. "Habitat and wildlife restoration, or land protection, by General Electric to help address this problem could begin at any time."

In the Hudson River study area, a total of 108 minks were detected, compared to 208 minks in the Mohawk River study area. The Mohawk had nearly two minks per square kilometer (about a third of a square mile), compared to between 1.2 minks per square kilometer on the Hudson.

Researchers used trained dogs during 2013 and 2014 along more than 300 miles of habitat on the two rivers to locate mink droppings, called scat. The dropping were then analyzed through DNA tests to individual minks. Test results were then used to project how many minks were present.

Researchers came from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; the U.S. Geological Survey; and the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Published this summer in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, the study is the result of efforts that started in 1997 to quantify what harm PCBs caused to the river and how GE should be made to address it as part of a Natural Resources Damages Assessment.

GE wrapped up a \$1.7 billion PCB dredging project in 2014 and is awaiting a report from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on whether the cleanup satisfied a 2002 agreement between EPA and the company.

GE believes it has done so, while the state and several environmental groups believe that too many PCBs were left behind and will continue to contaminate the river for decades to come.

"The job is far from done. The study released today is further evidence of GE's failure to complete the cleanup and EPA's years of failed oversight," according to a statement from the state Department of Environmental Conservation. "New York will continue to use all legal tools to vigorously challenge the EPA and hold GE accountable for the costs of a full cleanup."

Said GE spokesman Mark Behan, "The Hudson River is an environmental success story. The limited study of comparative mink scat findings does nothing to diminish the success of the Hudson cleanup or the ongoing environmental recovery of the river as a whole."

Continued study of PCB damage to the Hudson comes as GE's corporate finances appear increasingly precarious. There is still no timeline on when the final ecological damages report might be released by the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The three agencies are designated as federal trustees to judge damage to the Hudson.

Since the cleanup ended, GE has sparred with both federal agencies _ USFW and NOAA _ over the agencies' earlier claims that excessive levels of PCBs were left behind in the river.

GE dredged PCBs from 40 miles of river bottom between Fort Edward and Troy between 2009 and 2014. That amounted to 310,000 pounds, or 72 percent of what is now known to be in the river. That means 120,000 pounds remain along the bottom, including in the navigation channel of the state's Champlain Canal.

This summer, GE's financial woes led it to be removed from the Dow Jones Industrial Average after more than a century. This month, the company ousted its CEO and later slashed its normally reliable dividend payment to a penny.

Margaret Byrne, a USFW spokeswoman, said concerns over GE's future ability to pay for restoration of natural damages, is "outside the scope" of the most recent report on PCB impacts on mink.

This is the sixth such report issued by the federal trustees since 2001 on areas including fishery resources, navigation, waterfowl, groundwater and surface water resources. As part of a final damages report, the trustees would estimate monetary damages that could fund restoration projects on the river.

A report issued in February by the three river trustees questioned the effectiveness of the dredging project. That report found that while PCB levels in the river showed a decline, those levels as recently as 2014 remained well above federal safety guidelines, as well as above state standards meant to protect humans and animals that eat river fish.

"Enough time has passed. Enough studies have been done," said Althea Mullarkey, policy analyst for the advocacy group Scenic Hudson that supports further dredging. "It is time for a cooperative natural damages agreement to be made by GE."

Making a federal case: Jeffries vows to fight for EPA Superfund status for Coney Island Creek

By Julianne McShane

October 31, 2018



It's a super idea.

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D–Coney Island) will push to get Coney Island Creek designated as a federal Superfund site, he promised locals at an Oct. 24 Community Board 13 meeting. The congressman told attendees that he would push for federal funding to help clean up the beleaguered waterway after board secretary Jeff Sanoff asked Jeffries if he would fight for Superfund status for the creek.

“I’m committed to making sure we do everything possible to clean up Coney Island Creek,” Jeffries said. “If a Superfund site designation is the best vehicle for doing that, that’s something I’m committed to do.”

Superfund status allocates federal Environmental Protection Agency funding and resources to clean up contaminated sites and “forces the parties responsible for the contamination to either perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work,” according to the federal agency, which has administered the program since its creation in 1980.

Jeffries added that he also wanted to pursue other options for cleaning up the Creek as well, but said he would prioritize securing Superfund status for the waterway.

“I want to explore what the other opportunities may be, but I will double and triple down on that effort,” he said.

The creek is filled with toxic chemicals — including arsenic, cyanide, and benzene — from the industrial facilities that once lined its shores and dumped waste there for more than fifty years, according to Coney Island historian Charles Denson, who added that illegal shipbreaking operations also used the creek as a dumping ground for boat debris in ’70s as the industrial facilities shuttered.

But despite the creek’s toxic history, the federal environmental agency did not include it on its list of sites “targeted for immediate, intense action” that an agency task force drew up last year.

A spokesman for the federal environmental agency, Elias Rodriguez, said that the creek is under city and state supervision and referred all questions to the state Department of Environmental Conservation. But a spokeswoman from the state environmental agency put the onus back on the federal agency, which she said has the authority to prioritize waterways in the national context, adding that the state’s authority is only to address specific sites where hazardous wastes have been disposed.

One local environmentalist said the federal agency should prioritize considering the creek, since locals regularly wade into it and even eat from it — despite its history of pollution.

“That creek is still an important food source. People are eating the fish from there, people are going into the water to be baptized,” said Brighton Beach resident and activist Ida Sanoff, wife of the CB13 secretary. “There’s a history of over a hundred years of industrial pollution.”

The Superfund designation process includes assessing the site’s history and determining its level of national priority, conducting a feasibility study to determine the nature and extent of the contamination, and developing detailed clean-up plans, among other steps, according to the federal agency.

The agency designated that Gowanus Canal a Superfund site in 2010 – a year after placing the Canal on its priority list — a — and allocated \$500 million to the waterway’s decade-long clean-up.

Coney environmentalists have spent the past few years fighting to clean the creek. Members of CB13 unanimously voted to seek state Superfund status for the creek in 2016— meaning state regulators would figure out who was responsible for the dirty waterway’s deplorable condition and bill them for the clean-up. That vote came two months after this paper reported that regulators discovered that sixteen buildings in Gravesend’s Beach Haven Apartments were dumping roughly 200,000 gallons of raw sewage per day into the creek, possibly for years.

But the state Department of Environmental Conservation rejected that request last year, according to district manager Eddie Mark. A spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Conservation said the agency “carefully considered” the board’s request but did not specifically say why the agency rejected it.

Local environmentalists also sounded the alarm last year after the state approved a permit for the city to pour up to 7.2 million gallons of filtered-but-contaminated ground water into the creek every day for up to two years while the city upgrades sewer and water mains in the neighborhood’s west end.

The state has since announced recent less-than-Superfund initiatives to clean up the creek. The state Department of Environmental Conservation said earlier this year that the top brass at Beach Haven paid a \$ 400,000 fine for dumping the fecal matter in the creek, most of which would go to cleaning up the waterway.

But Sanoff said the state-sponsored initiatives don’t do enough, and that the businesses and factories that polluted the Creek closed years ago, meaning that the “millions” needed to clean up the waterway should come from the federal government.

“In most of the cases of the businesses surrounding the Creek, they closed long ago, or there was fly-by-night illegal dumping,” she said. “That’s you need a Superfund — there’s really nobody there who could be held responsible.”

PUERTO RICO / VIRGIN ISLANDS

VI DAILY NEWS

[V.I. to test tsunami alert sirens](#)

By Daily News Staff

November 5, 2018

The V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency will test tsunami warning sirens at Cramer Park and La Valle on St. Croix; Lucinda Millin Home, Enid Baa Library, Bolongo Bay Beach Resort and Ezra Fredericks Ballpark on St. Thomas; and at Frank Bay on St. John at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The purpose of testing is to provide the agency with an updated status of the siren's audible functions, according to a press release VITEMA issued Friday.

Following hurricanes Irma and Maria, VITEMA has been conducting silent testing of the tsunami alert sirens monthly, and during the most recent test, the above sirens tested "green," which signifies that they are functioning, according to the release.

"Due to the impact of the 2017 hurricane season, our territory-wide tsunami alert siren system was severely damaged. This testing is a necessary step in bringing the network of tsunami alert sirens back online," VITEMA Director Mona Barnes said in the release. "Through FEMA's Public Assistance program, VITEMA has received 90 percent of the funding to restore the system while making improvements to its structure; the remaining 10 percent of the required funding has been allocated by the government of the Virgin Islands."

Barnes said her agency is working with the vendor to ensure the sirens are replaced and are strengthened to mitigate damages from future storms.

During the test, Virgin Islands' residents within the vicinity of the sirens may hear:

"This is a test of the emergency warning system. This is only a test," followed by a 10-second Westminster chime, in turn followed by "Test of the emergency warning system is complete. This has only been a test."

VI DAILY NEWS

Limetree Bay announces 'agreement in principle' with possible oil supplier

By Daily News Staff

November 4, 2018

Limetree Bay Refining announced Sunday that it has reached an "agreement in principle" with a "major international oil company."

"Under the contemplated terms," Limetree will process the company's oil and the unnamed company would then "offtake" the processed product, according to the press release.

However, the press release did not give any details as to how much oil will be processed, what percentage of the refinery's production the unnamed oil company will purchase and an agreement in principle is not a guarantee an agreement will eventually be reached.

"Details about the agreement will be made available in the next week to ten days," the press release stated. "Limetree Bay Refining anticipates completion of the restart by late 2019."

According to Investopedia, offtake agreements are often negotiated prior to the construction of a facility to secure a market for the producer's future output, a step that helps companies secure financing, but doesn't guarantee it.

In June, ArcLight Capital Partners, which owns Limetree, announced it would invest \$1.4 billion to refurbish the former HOVENSA refinery on St. Croix and begin refining crude oil again.

At the time, it was announced that restarting the refinery would create 1,200 construction jobs and 700 permanent jobs and result in the processing of about 200,000 barrels of crude oil a day. The permanent jobs would be in addition to the 750 jobs already in place at the storage facility, Gov. Kenneth Mapp stated in June.

Currently, there are 1,100 total workers at the refinery, according to Sunday's press release.

The refinery had a peak production of 650,000 barrels per day and more than 2,150 people still worked at the refinery in January 2012 when its closure was announced, according to Daily News archives.

VI DAILY NEWS

V.I. pays off \$16M electric bill, with \$27.4M to go

By Brian O'Connor

November 2, 2018

Government officials have paid off a sizeable debt owed to the territory's utility, a V.I. Water and Power Authority spokesman said Friday.

However, millions of dollars in outstanding bills remain to be paid, WAPA spokesman Jean Greaux Jr. told The Daily News on Friday.

Officials have paid off outstanding electric bills for powering the territory's streetlights, according to a WAPA press release issued Friday morning. The balance owed for the streetlights was about \$15.8 million in January 2015, Greaux said.

Lonny Soury, a communications consultant who has in the past served as a spokesman for the Mapp administration's finance team, said the money to pay off the bills may have come from federal transportation funds.

Soury said he would have to check into the information relating to the payoff, but had not furnished additional details as of press time.

Numerous other agencies owe millions more in unpaid electric bills, which the utility generally refers to as government receivables, Greaux said.

The agencies with the largest unpaid electric bills are the hospitals and government instrumentalities:

- Luis Hospital on St. Croix owes \$12.4 million in unpaid electric bills.
- Schneider Hospital on St. Thomas owes \$11.1 million.
- The Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority owes \$1.7 million.

Central government agencies — a category including V.I. Police, V.I. Fire Service, V.I. Education, and other executive branch departments — owe about \$2.2 million, Greaux said.

"They range anywhere from a credit of \$50,000 to a payable of \$353,000," he said.

The territory also has revamped its streetlight infrastructure and replaced arc light street lights with LED lights, meaning future bills should be more manageable, Executive Director Lawrence Kupfer said in the WAPA press release.

"For many years, the streetlight debt had been among one of the four top outstanding obligations to WAPA," Kupfer said in a prepared statement. "The streetlight account now has a zero balance and, additionally, going forward with the addition of our new efficient LED lighting program, street light billings should see a significant savings for the territory."

The money — the final payment to bring the government current was made in late October, following months of gradual payments against the obligation — was good news for the utility, Greaux said.

"Any time you've got money coming in the door against an outstanding obligation, it's a good day," he said.

The EPA Has Disappeared Its Climate Page

<https://www.ecowatch.com/epa-has-disappeared-its-climate-page-2617379092.html>

Olivia Rosane- Nov. 02, 2018 07:43AM EST

"We want to help you find what you are looking for."

That is the message you get if you type epa.gov/climatechange into your web browser, along with a link to the archived U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mainpage as of Jan. 19, 2017, the day before Donald Trump became president.

A screenshot of the current EPA climate change page. *EPA*



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In April 2017, the EPA replaced its "climate change" page with an update message saying the site was being changed to "reflect the agency's new direction under President Donald Trump." But now even the promise of an update is gone, a new report from the Environmental Data & Governance Initiative (EDGI) discovered Thursday.

"It's an embarrassment. It is a ghost page," Obama-era EPA Regional Administrator Judith Enck told The Guardian. "It's a bit like Amazon not allowing the public to order books via its website – it's that fundamental. There's no other issue at the EPA more important than climate change; it affects air, water, health and whether large parts of the world will survive."

The EDGI report said that the changes occurred between 5:12 p.m. Oct. 16 and 3:04 a.m. Oct. 17. In addition to changing the main text of the page, the website also replaced a link to a snapshot of the EPA's Obama-era climate change page with a snapshot of the EPA's Obama-era mainpage and deleted a link to a press release explaining the changes. In September, the EPA also removed a link on the page to the EPA's searchable archive and technical support request form.

"The cumulative effect of removing these links from the splash page is the substantial reduction of access to EPA's historical public information about climate change," the EDGI report said.

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A screenshot of the EPA climate change page before (left) and after (right) the most recent changes *EDG/*

The website changes are in keeping with a Trump administration tradition of scrubbing climate information from government websites

Motherboard offered a brief history:

This is far from the first time that the Trump administration has removed information relating to climate change and environmental hazards. Shortly after Trump's inauguration in January 2017, all references to climate change were removed from the White House website. In April of that year, the Department of the Interior all references to climate change from its public-facing website. The Federal Emergency Management Agency does not even mention climate change in its five-year plan released earlier this year.

Former EPA administrator Scott Pruitt was famously hostile to climate science and wanted to stage a televised debate on the topic. One anonymous EPA official speculated to The Guardian that the changes might reflect the priorities of his replacement, former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler.

"Wheeler has been somewhat meticulously going through the mess Pruitt left behind and I think is finally getting to the place of making some decisions on stuff," the official said. "I've been surprised that we are still even talking about climate change and that there are still people nominally assigned to that beat in the air office."

Wheeler has continued with Pruitt's efforts to deregulate everything from power plant emissions to fuel efficiency standards and has said that "federal regulations are not necessary to drive greenhouse gas reductions," The Guardian reported.

The Guardian: It's a ghost page': EPA site's climate change section may be gone for good

Material that said humans were warming the planet was taken down last year for an 'update'

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/nov/01/epa-website-climate-change-trump-administration>

Oliver Milman- Thu 1 Nov 2018 15.37 EDT

More than a year after the US Environmental Protection Agency took down information on climate change from its website for an “update”, it now seems uncertain whether it will ever reappear.

In April last year, the EPA replaced its online climate change section with a holding page that said the content was being updated to “reflect the agency’s new direction under President Donald Trump”.

Information previously found at epa.gov/climatechange made it clear that human activity was warming the planet, resulting in harm to Americans’ health as well as crucial ecosystems on which humans depend.

The “update” page has now given way to a page that simply states: “We want to help you find what you are looking for.” Below, there are links to search other areas of the EPA website, as well as to an archived “snapshot” of the site from the day before Trump became president in January 2017. The switch was observed by the Environmental Data & Governance Initiative, which tracks changes in government websites.

“It’s an embarrassment. It is a ghost page,” said Judith Enck, who was EPA regional administrator during Barack Obama’s presidency. “It’s a bit like Amazon not allowing the public to order books via its website – it’s that fundamental. There’s no other issue at the EPA more important than climate change; it affects air, water, health and whether large parts of the world will survive.”

Scott Pruitt, a climate change skeptic who was Trump’s pick as EPA administrator until he resigned in July amid a long-running ethics scandal, repeatedly questioned basic scientific understanding of climate change while he headed the agency, such as whether carbon dioxide is a primary driver of planetary warming.

The EPA under the Trump administration has attempted to roll back all key measures designed to address climate change, such as limits on pollution from coal plants, rules to prevent methane emissions from oil and gas drilling and tighter fuel efficiency standards for cars. Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist who is now acting EPA administrator, has said “federal regulations are not necessary to drive greenhouse gas reductions”.

A senior EPA official, who asked not to be named, said: “Wheeler has been somewhat meticulously going through the mess Pruitt left behind and I think is finally getting to the place of making some decisions on stuff.” The official added: “I’ve been surprised that we are still even talking about climate change and that there are still people nominally assigned to that beat in the air office.”

Enck said that EPA career staff are “frustrated” and “ashamed” about the new stance on climate change and urged her former colleagues to speak out.

The administration also began taking the ax to climate change language across other government websites in the spring of 2017.

“The EPA website is used by decision and policy makers, not just for high school student assignments,” she said. “The lack of timely, accurate information is part of a much deeper problem that the agency is on the sidelines of the most urgent environment issue of our time.”

The EPA was contacted for comment.

Newsweek: TRUMP'S EPA MAY HAVE SHUT DOWN IT'S CLIMATE CHANGE WEBSITE FOR GOOD

<https://www.newsweek.com/epa-shits-down-climate-change-websites-1198362>

BY ALEXANDRA HUTZLER ON 11/2 /18 AT 10:59 AM

The Environmental Protection Agency has stopped updating its websites with climate change information, instead leaving site visitors with error messages and blank pages.

In April 2017, three months after noted climate-change skeptic Donald Trump took office, the EPA removed its climate change subdomains from public access. Overall, at least 80 URLs, including epa.gov/climatechange, were shut down. The federal agency claimed the move was only temporary and that the sites were “being updated” to reflect the new priorities of the agency under the new leadership of President Trump and then-EPA chief Scott Pruitt. Pruitt has since resigned due to ethics scandals.

“The process which involves updating language to reflect the approach of new leadership, is intended to ensure that the public can use the website to understand the agency’s current efforts,” a press release sent out by the agency read at the time.

But a report released last week by the Environmental Data & Governance Initiative showed that in October the EPA modified the splash page and removed statements saying that the website was under construction. Now, the page simply states: “We want to help you find what you are looking for.”

Along with discontinuing any potential updates to the climate change sites, the EPA removed links to their searchable web archive for any past information on the subject and a link to their technical support request form.

The Trump administration has made it clear that the environment is not a top priority, even though the president has said that he has a “natural instinct for science” that informs his understanding of climate change. Shortly after taking office, the Trump administration had all references to climate change removed from the White House website.

Trump's EPA climate change website

Emissions and steam rise from the American Electric Power Co. (AEP) coal-fired John E. Amos Power Plant in Winfield, West Virginia, on Wednesday, July 18. A new report shows that the Environmental Protection Agency has taken down their websites about climate change.

Trump dismissed an October report by a group of climate scientists from around the world, which warned that the effects of climate change may become irreversible by 2024, saying, “You’d have to show me the scientists because they have a very big political agenda.”

Pruitt, Trump’s first pick to lead the EPA, notoriously suggested that global warming could be beneficial for humans. “We know humans have most flourished during times of warming trends,” Pruitt said earlier this year before being ousted for racking up multiple ethics violations, like using his office to attempt to get his wife to become a Chick-fil-a franchisee and spending \$43,000 to soundproof a phone booth in his government office.

Pruitt’s replacement, Andrew Wheeler, was one of the biggest coal lobbyists in Washington and sued the EPA 14 times while serving as the attorney general of Oklahoma against pollution restrictions.

The Environmental Data & Governance Initiative says that the “cumulative effect of removing” these pages and URL links is “substantial reduction of access to the EPA’s historical public information about climate change.”

Ecowatch: Trump's EPA Sides With Monsanto, Extends Dicamba 2 More Years

<https://www.ecowatch.com/epa-dicamba-trump-monsanto-2617361799.html>

Olivia Rosane- Nov. 02, 2018 06:48AM EST

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced Wednesday that it would allow farmers to continue spraying the controversial pesticide dicamba for the next two years. Dicamba is sold by Monsanto to be used on soybean and cotton plants genetically engineered to be resistant to the weedkiller. The problem is that it drifts on the wind, harming non-resistant crops and wild plants. Over the past two years, it damaged around five million acres of crops, trees and gardens, the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) said.

The approval does come with new restrictions, but experts and activists say they are not enough.

"The Trump EPA's reckless re-approval of this dangerous poison ignores the facts on the ground and damage across millions of acres," CBD senior scientist Nathan Donley said. "Simply adding more use restrictions to an uncontrollable pesticide that already comes with 39 pages of instructions and limitations reflects a broken process. Pesticide regulation has been hijacked by pesticide makers."

New restrictions, according to CBD and NPR, include:

- Only certified applicators will be able to spray the pesticide.
- For soybeans, spraying will have to end 45 days after planting.
- For cotton, spraying will have to end 60 days after planting.
- There must be a 57 foot spraying buffer around fields where endangered species may be present.
- Spraying will only be allowed during certain times of day.

Iowa State University weed specialist Bob Hartzler wrote a breakdown of the new regulations and how effective he thought they might be.

"Unfortunately, I don't think these new restrictions will have a significant impact on the problems we've seen the past two years," he concluded.

Dicamba is a controversial issue for farmers, NPR reported. Some swear by it, while others feel pressured to buy only Dicamba-tolerant seeds or risk having their crops damaged by spraying nearby.

The whole set-up is a major coup for Monsanto, as NPR explained:

Dicamba has been a huge success for Monsanto, the company that sells both dicamba-tolerant seeds and a version of the herbicide that's specially formulated for use on them. This past year, dicamba-tolerant seeds were planted on some 40 million acres, representing close to half of all soybeans and cotton in the United States. Bayer, the German company that now owns Monsanto, expects that total to grow to 60 million acres in 2019.

But independent soybean sellers Beck's Hybrids and Stine Seed have pushed the EPA for further restrictions, arguing that farmers should have a real choice between seeds, one that isn't born out of fear.

It's not just non-Monsanto crops that are at risk. CBD warned that dicamba could further harm already vulnerable wildlife like monarch butterflies. A CBD report found that more than 60 million acres of monarch habitat will be sprayed with dicamba by next year, threatening both the flowering plants needed by the migrating adult butterflies and the milkweed that is the caterpillars' only food source.

"It's going to take far stronger action to curb dicamba's well-documented dangers to non-target plants and wildlife like monarch butterflies," Donley said.

There is currently a lawsuit challenging the EPA's original approval of dicamba, but it has not been decided yet, NPR reported.

The Hill: How to fight bad science infiltrating the EPA

<https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/414502-how-to-fight-bad-science-infiltrating-the-epa>

BY MIKE MIKULKA, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 11/02/18 11:30 AM EDT

Scientific integrity is under attack by the U.S. EPA. Why has the erosion of clean air and water regulations become the norm? What good comes from reversing environmental protections and basic scientific integrity? What can your vote on Nov. 6 do about it?

For months, EPA's Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler has been dismantling the agency by stacking the EPA Advisory Board nominees with fossil fuel industry allies who have dubious credentials. Meanwhile, Wheeler has cut mainstream scientists and disregarded sound science.

Wheeler relies on the White House's biased, political agenda of deregulation to justify rolling back environmental protections. In the last 100 days, he has disbanded one EPA advisory panel on air pollution and stacked another with industry allies. He's rolled back Clean Car emissions standards, proposed to replace the Clean Power Plan's limits on carbon emissions with a rule that favors the coal industry and threatened to scrap the mercury-limiting air toxics rule despite its proven public health benefits. Congress has done nothing to stop him.

His infamous predecessor, Scott Pruitt, made lots of noise about challenging scientific principles that undergird clean air and water protections. He also entertained contriving a climate debate that had even this White House worrying. One of his own advisors complaining that it made no sense. Implying preconceived conclusions through a "red" and "blue" team "debate" on climate change misunderstands scientific inquiry itself, which knows no political party, nor should it.

Yet, Wheeler is quickly and quietly intensifying and realizing Pruitt's anti-science agenda.

In mid-October, Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, disbanded EPA's advisory panel on particulate matter — emissions that can lead to lung cancer. He then stacked EPA's primary air pollution advisory panel, known as CASAC (Clean Air Science Advisory Committee), with industry-disposed scientists. This panel advises EPA on the safe level of air pollution. The panel had previously been balanced with respected academics, industry professionals, and non-profit science groups. Not any longer. One of the new appointees claimed that researchers overplayed the dangers of air pollution and reduced smog would not benefit public health. Another said fine particulate matter, or soot, is not linked to lung health.

Currently, Wheeler is about to select new, like-minded members to EPA's Science Advisory Board, and among his choices are:

a tobacco-industry-funded researcher who downplays the health risks of secondhand smoke and fine particulate matter
an Exxon Mobil consultant who disagrees with the overwhelming consensus on greenhouse gases causing climate change

two folks who argue that more carbon dioxide will benefit humans (It won't.)

Would they have Americans think it's safe to smoke cigarettes? That is Scott Pruitt's red team/blue team debate idea, only worse: it's for all clean air issues, not just climate. And there's only one team: red.

If he is successful, Wheeler effectively could select the counselors to Philip Morris, Exxon Mobil, and coal giant Murray Energy to help review and filter the public health data that EPA considers. The fox is not just guarding the henhouse, it's inviting the wolves to come in.

Andrew Wheeler's crusade to dismantle health and safety regulations will have dire consequences in the real world. To be clear: scientists, including those at EPA, widely agree that smog can cause asthma and other respiratory problems, while soot is linked to lung cancer and other deadly conditions, and mercury is, indeed, a neurotoxin that can harm a developing fetus. But regularly those scientific voices are being silenced in favor of the industry voices.

Millions of Americans' health is at stake, and his next actions to stack the EPA's Science Advisory Board could bring more erosion of public health standards and more risk to vulnerable communities and our children. Despite, our constitutional system of checks and balances, Congress has done little to stand in the way of this anti-science crusade to undermine EPA.

While EPA is taking public comment on the Science Advisory Board nominees until Nov. 7, the best way to stop Wheeler from undermining scientific integrity is one day earlier, November 6, at the polls, by electing a Congress that will stand up for science.

DTN: Washington Insider – Friday

<https://www.dtnpf.com/agriculture/web/ag/perspectives/columns/washington-insider/article/2018/11/02/tariff-war-scrambles-u-s-trade>

Tariff War Scrambles- 11/2/2018 | 6:11 AM CDT

Here's a quick monitor of Washington farm and trade policy issues from DTN's well-placed observer.

EPA Moves to Exempt Livestock Operations From Emissions Reporting Rule

The Trump administration is moving forward with a plan to permanently exempt livestock operations from requirements to report releases of hazardous air emissions to state and local emergency officials, setting up a likely legal showdown with environmentalists over the scope of the underlying statute.

A newly proposed rule would shield farms from the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), the 1986 statute that requires the reporting of emissions of hazardous chemicals above certain thresholds.

The law affects large livestock operations as animal waste produces ammonia and hydrogen sulfides, the two gases that can trigger notification responsibilities under EPCRA. Releases of more than 100 pounds a day must be reported under the law.

EPA has long suggested concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) should be exempt from the law but its past efforts have been struck down in federal court.

In 2017 a federal appeals court sided with environmentalists and blocked a 2008 rule that exempted most CAFOs from EPCRA and all farms from inter-related requirements laid out by the Superfund law. The move prompted the Trump administration to issue new guidance last year that went further than the 2008 rule, exempting all farms from the EPCRA requirements. Congress in March enacted an exemption for CAFOs from reporting requirements of the Superfund law within the 2018 omnibus spending bill.

The bid to again codify the EPCRA exemption in regulation has strong support from the agriculture industry and was announced Tuesday (Oct. 30) by Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, along with Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, state emergency responders and representatives of the livestock industry.

"It was never the intent of Congress for normal odors from animal waste on farms to fall under our nation's emergency hazardous waste reporting requirements," Moran said.

Wheeler echoed that sentiment Wednesday (Oct. 31) at the National Chicken Council (NCC) annual meeting where he said the proposal will ensure the livestock exemption is "clear and crystallized" in a rulemaking.

"Doing so will provide much needed certainty and clarity to America's farmers, ranchers and chicken producers," Wheeler told NCC. "It will save them from onerous reporting requirements and [from] third parties possibly using that information against them in litigation."

More Recommended for You

EPA Approves Two-Year Registration for Dicamba, But Adds Restrictions

The registration of dicamba has been extended for two years for "over-the-top" application for cotton and soybeans genetically engineered to be resistant to the herbicide, but some additional restrictions on applications were announced by EPA to address "potential concerns to surrounding crops and plants."

"EPA understands that dicamba is a valuable pest control tool for America's farmers," said EPA Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "By extending the registration for another two years with important new label updates that place additional restrictions on the product, we are providing certainty to all stakeholders for the upcoming growing season."

The two-year registration goes until December 20, 2020, and over-the-top applications on soybeans are prohibited 45 days after planting and 60 days after planting for cotton. The number of over-the-top applications for cotton would be reduced to two while soybeans will remain at two. Applications will only be allowed from one hour after sunrise to two hours before sunset.

In counties where endangered species may exist, the downwind buffer will remain at 110 feet and there will be a new 57-foot buffer around the other sides of the field (the 110-foot downwind buffer applies to all applications, not just in counties where endangered species may exist). There are also enhanced tank clean-out instructions and the registration for all dicamba products will automatically expire December 20, 2020, unless EPA further extends it.

Washington Insider: Tariff War Scrambles US Trade Routes

It is not news that many producers are concerned about the impact of the administration's "get tough" trade policies. In addition, Bloomberg is reporting this week that not only is the trade fight "rattling global soybean markets. It's also shifting the flow of crops within the U.S., changing pricing patterns and boosting storage needs for much of this season's bumper crop."

Traders shipping soybeans through the Pacific Northwest, a key export hub for flows to China, are now diverting supply from that pattern south to the Gulf of Mexico, where the product can be shipped to alternative destinations including Iran and the European Union. Corn flows are also changing, with some elevator owners shipping more of the grain to make space for soybeans.

"A very big part of the soybean supply that typically moves out of the U.S. to China comes off the West Coast, and that's just not happening now," Soren Schroder, chief executive officer of Bunge Ltd., told Bloomberg on Wednesday. "But that doesn't mean that there are no bids for soybeans, it just means that they are most likely directed toward crushing plants in the domestic market or export channels that take the flows to the Gulf."

Still, Schroder said, "it's building up a historically high level of soybean stocks that will carry through this year, and into next."

Soybeans that usually get sent by rail to the Pacific Northwest ports for export are now moving by train to areas near the Mississippi River, where they get put on a barge to the Gulf, according to Jim Sutter, CEO of the U.S. Soybean Export Council. St. Louis is one of the common spots for that, he said.

The Pacific Northwest is also getting more corn at the start of the season as some grain elevators seek to make storage room for higher-priced soybeans. All of that is creating dislocations and price gaps that traders with domestic assets can benefit from.

"In the short term, dislocations caused by tariffs create arbitrage opportunities that well-positioned merchants and shippers can benefit from," Corey Jorgenson, president of the grain unit of The Andersons Inc. "Long term, the trade war is bad for our business and is really bad for U.S. farmers."

The trade war already created a merry-go-round of sorts in international trade, with Argentina and Canada buying U.S. soybeans for local processing while exporting their own produce, Bloomberg says. It's now doing the same within the U.S., creating local-price arbitrages and reshaping the way crops flow.

The impacts of the changes in flows affect growers differently in different regions, Bloomberg said. Growers in the Dakotas, Minnesota and Nebraska, more northern states whose crops used to flow west, have sold at discounts as wide as \$1.80 a bushel against Chicago futures — while farmers in some southern poultry-producing regions see stronger prices.

Monte Peterson, who farms both corn and soybeans on 4,500 acres in Valley City, an hour away from Fargo in North Dakota, says his local elevator is sending corn by rail to the Pacific Northwest instead of the usual soybeans, which can sell for two to three times more. Sutter says some are piling weather-resistant corn on the ground and storing the oilseed.

Bloomberg notes that the U.S. has approximately 8,500 grain elevators with 11.2 billion bushels of storage capacity.

"There are sales for corn and the opportunity to ship corn to the Pacific Northwest, at least in these nearby months," Peterson said. He sees that as "the only salvation" for some producers.

Despite the record size of this year's soybean crop, "the country has enough space" to store it, said Corey of The Andersons. "It's just an element of displacement that things need to move to non-traditional places."

Meanwhile, Sutter said his export group is bringing trade delegations from countries other than China to try to persuade them to buy from the Pacific Northwest, or the PNW as its referred to within the industry.

"We've been bringing trade teams" in to visit the PNW and the states that usually supply that region so they can learn about the trade route and the quality of U.S. soy, Sutter said. That includes groups from Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. And they've already scored a win with a memorandum of understanding with Taiwan.

"We saw Taiwan buy soybeans off the PNW for the first time in 15 years," he said.

So, U.S. producers have long been famous for their sophisticated marketing and transportation systems, and for their "sharp pencils." Thus, highly complex new marketing schemes can be expected to emerge. However, producers also are increasingly aware of the impacts of the trade war on their markets overall, and can be expected to continue to press hard for market interventions that reduce the negative impacts of the national trade fight, Washington Insider believes.

Daily News: EPA fines 2 trucking companies for air pollution, requires them to pay for indoor air filtration at Southern California schools

<https://www.dailynews.com/2018/11/02/epa-fines-2-trucking-companies-for-air-pollution-requires-them-to-pay-for-indoor-air-filtration-at-southern-california-schools/>

By STEVE SCAUZILLO - November 2, 2018 at 8:30 am

Two interstate trucking companies failed to install filters in hundreds of diesel trucks that spewed tons of lung-damaging pollution into the air near schools, hospitals and daycare centers in Southern California, resulting in penalties of \$225,000 assessed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, air pollution agencies announced Thursday.

In addition, the trucking companies will spend \$575,000 to install indoor air filtration systems in classrooms and multi-purpose rooms at schools and daycare centers in Los Angeles and Rialto, according to a settlement reached with the EPA.

The Green Bay, WI-based Schneider National, Inc. operated 150 large diesel trucks in California from 2013-2016 without diesel particulate filters.

Also, the company did not verify that 1,200 of the carriers it hired complied with the California Truck and Bus Rule, enforced by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), according to the EPA.

Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc., based in Thomasville, N.C., operated 117 diesel trucks without filters during the same time period and failed to verify 64 of its carriers with the rule.

Old Dominion's portion of the penalties and settlement monies will be used to install filtration equipment at schools in the Rialto area, the EPA said.

Filters needed

Functioning big-rig truck tailpipe filters, in addition to a cadre of indoor air purifiers at schools, will cut the amount of pollutants by 90 percent, according to air quality officials.

Filters on trucks help prevent fine particulates smaller than 2.5 microns and ultrafine particulates 0.1 microns in size from entering the air.

When breathed, particulates bypass the body's natural defense systems and lodge in a child's lungs, causing asthma and degraded lung development that can lead to lung diseases later in life.

Also, particulates cause cardiovascular disease and even premature death in older adults, according to the EPA and the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

"Heavy-duty trucks can emit drastically higher levels of pollution when not equipped with required emissions controls," said Mike Stoker, EPA Pacific Southwest regional administrator during a press conference at Eastman Avenue Elementary School in East Los Angeles Thursday.

Diesel-powered vehicles account for half of the nitrogen oxides — a major component of local smog — and two-thirds of all the particulate emissions from transportation sources in the United States, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Eastman Avenue school will receive air filtration devices and indoor sensors made by IQAir, a Swiss-based company based in La Mirada, in all its classrooms, multipurpose rooms and cafeteria, as will the Eastman Avenue Early Education Center across the street.

The facilities are one block from the 710 and 5 freeways and just yards from trucking facilities. Studies show these devices increase student productivity, performance and attendance.

Eastman Avenue school Principal Teresa Armas speaks about the need for air filtration systems to protect children's lung health at her school on Thursday, Nov. 1, 2018. In background is Monica Garcia, LAUSD board president. (photo by Steve Scauzillo)

"It is the first time we are getting these," said Teresa Armas, school principal.

The school population — about 800 — has a much higher percentage of children with asthma than the general population, she said.

The SCAQMD has installed air filtration devices in 78 schools within the four-county air district, said Wayne Nastri, executive officer. Earlier this year, the district upgraded 10-year-old equipment at Resurrection Elementary School in nearby Boyle Heights.

"With kids in the classrooms, it is a much healthier environment," Nastri said during an interview Thursday.

Nastri said the SCAQMD is following the rules of Assembly Bill 617, signed into law in August 2017, which requires the agency to address localized "hot spots" such as freeways, rail yards and factories that emit pollutants near places with a high degree of exposure, such as schools and daycare centers.

"You will be seeing a lot more of these kinds of localized efforts," he said.

On Friday, the SCAQMD board will consider creating an \$87 million demonstration program for battery-electric, heavy-duty trucks with Volvo, said Sam Atwood, spokesman.

The program would require the company to deploy 23 electric trucks, cleaner off-loading equipment and a solar charging component at a future truck facility in Southern California.

Sierra Sun Times: California Attorney General Joins Comment Letter Strongly Criticizing Trump Administration's Proposed Dirty Power Plan

<https://goldrushcam.com/sierrasuntimes/index.php/news/local-news/16263-california-attorney-general-joins-comment-letter-strongly-criticizing-trump-administration-s-proposed-dirty-power-plan>

November 2, 2018 Proposed Plan Would Cause More Than 1,600 Premature Deaths Annually

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra has joined a multistate comment letter denouncing the Trump Administration's proposal to dismantle the Clean Power Plan that sets national limits on carbon emissions from existing fossil-fuel power plants. In place of the current Clean Power Plan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing an illegal "Dirty Power Plan" that does little to nothing to address climate change pollution from power plants, weakens implementation requirements for limits on greenhouse gases and other types of air pollution, and carves out a loophole enabling fossil-fuel power plants to increase their emissions of harmful particulate matter.

"The clock is ticking, and yet the Trump Administration continues to foolishly turn its back on any progress we've made to safeguard future generations," said Attorney General Becerra. "With this misguided plan that benefits corporate polluters over the well-being of the American public, Trump is callously selling out our children's future and vowing to make America dirty again."

The EPA's proposal would eliminate the 2015 Clean Power Plan, a culmination of a decade-long effort by partnering states and cities to require mandatory cuts of carbon pollution from fossil fuel-burning power plants under the Clean Air Act. If left intact, the Clean Power Plan would eliminate as much climate changing pollution as is emitted annually by more than 160 million cars a year – or 70 percent of the nation's passenger cars. In its 2018 proposal, the EPA admits that its new Dirty Power Plan would cause over 1,630 additional premature deaths per year by 2030. In addition, the EPA concedes the plan would cause up to 15,000 new cases of respiratory problems, and nearly 190,000 missed days of school and work.

The EPA's plan blatantly disregards pleas from the scientific community, businesses and world leaders to curb emissions. According to an October 2018 report, global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if emissions continue to increase at the current rate. Experts have warned that rolling back protections such as the Clean Power Plan would aggressively accelerate global warming with wide-ranging consequences, including temperature increases, ocean warming, sea level rise, increased hospitalizations and mortality, stress and die-off of animal and plant species, extreme weather events, famine, drought and forced human migration.

In the letter, the attorneys general demand that the EPA withdraw its illegal and foolish plan and address a number of issues with the proposal. In the letter, the states assert that the EPA's proposal:

Fails to provide sufficient opportunity for public participation in the rulemaking process. EPA has held only one public hearing and provided only 61 days of public comment for what is essentially three separate proposed rule changes. This is not adequate time to respond to what is essentially three separate proposed rules.

- Exempts all existing gas plants, and some coal plants, from carbon dioxide emission limits. The EPA improperly changes its interpretation of what is considered the best system of emission reduction, mischaracterizes and ignores scientific evidence, and illegally fails to regulate pollution sources.
- Ignores emission reduction systems that have resulted in shifts to cleaner forms of electricity generation.
- Relies on an unlawful interpretation of the Clean Air Act, with little reasoning. The EPA reverses prior positions and legal interpretations, without justification, and fails to fulfill the agency's legal duty to control harmful emissions under Section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act.

- Fails to consider to relevant evidence regarding additional proven systems of emission reductions and arbitrarily constrains its own analysis.
- Weakens rules that apply to power plant modifications that increase or add new emissions by creating a broad exemption to New Source Review permitting requirements, and thus, harming public health and the environment.

Attorney General Becerra will continue to vigorously defend the Clean Power Plan. In addition to the day's action, Attorney General Becerra has:

- On March 28, 2017, issued a statement preparing to defend Clean Power Plan.
- On January 9, 2018, led a coalition of 19 states and municipalities in submitting a 30-page comment letter to the EPA on due process violations, lack of fairness, and ethical lapses that arise from Administrator Scott Pruitt's involvement in the proposed rulemaking to repeal the Clean Power Plan.
- On February 27, 2018, defended the Clean Power Plan in an EPA listening session in San Francisco.
- On April 26, 2018, led a coalition of 16 attorneys general and municipalities, submitted a supplemental comment letter to the EPA with additional evidence of due process violations, lack of fairness, and ethical lapses stemming from Administrator Scott Pruitt's involvement in the EPA's efforts to repeal Clean Power Plan.
- On August 21, 2018, issued a strong statement upon the announcement of the Trump Administration's proposal to dismantle the Clean Power Plan, and committed to join the multistate coalition set to challenge a replacement rule if adopted.
- On October 26, 2018, published an article on the significance of the Clean Power Plan and the National Clean Car Standards

Delaware business now: EPA grant to aid wetlands in Delaware

<https://delawarebusinessnow.com/2018/11/epa-grant-to-aid-wetlands-in-delaware/>
By Delaware Business Now - November 2, 2018

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has awarded \$341,691 to the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) for wetlands.

“The information that this project will generate is critical to understanding, protecting and restoring Delaware’s wetlands habitat,” said EPA Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio. “It will provide the kind of sound scientific data that is essential for effective wetlands protection.”

“Delaware is pleased to leverage this wetlands grant from our federal partners into another opportunity to continue improving our state’s water quality,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “Wetlands are a critical link in ensuring clean water for all Delawareans, and the ecological value they provide in conserving and preserving our most precious natural resource – our water supply – cannot be overstated.”

DNREC also will use the funds for demonstrating and documenting the most successful techniques for restoring coastal habitat, in addition to providing opportunities for improving public education and outreach about wetlands conservation.

Tech Forum newsletter Nov. 2018 Tech art

Healthy wetlands perform important ecological functions, such as feeding downstream waters, trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies, removing pollution, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife, an EPA release stated.

For more wetlands information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants>.

Environmental Working Group: Is EPA's Climate Change Website Gone for Good?

<https://www.ewg.org/release/epa-s-climate-change-website-gone-good>

Alex Formuzis- FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2018

WASHINGTON – The section of the Environmental Protection Agency's website that linked human activity, fossil fuels and carbon dioxide to climate change seems to have disappeared for good.

This week the Environmental Data & Governance Initiative, or EDGI, which monitors any changes to federal agency websites, discovered that the main climate change section of the EPA's site is gone.

In April 2017, the agency took down the website, claiming it was temporary, in order to update the content to reflect the Trump administration's views on climate change.

Now, EDGI reports, the "update" notice has been replaced with no mention of climate change. Instead, site visitors get this message: "We want to help you find what you are looking for."

"Apparently, they don't want to help very much," said EWG President Ken Cook.

"But it's not hard to figure out why," said Cook. "Andrew Wheeler, acting chief of the agency, was a longtime lobbyist for the fossil fuel industry before he joined President Trump's anti-science, anti-public-health administration. Why would he want an EPA website packed with irrefutable data detailing how that industry is a leading driver behind dirty air, increases in childhood asthma and premature death, wildfires and hurricanes from hell, rising sea levels, drought and famine?"

The Ring of Fire: The EPA's Climate Change Websites Have All Disappeared

<https://trofire.com/2018/11/02/the-epas-climate-change-websites-have-all-disappeared/>

By Farron Cousins - November 2, 2018

A new report has revealed that the US Environmental Protection Agency has officially purged their climate change websites, making it impossible for Americans to get information about the growing threat without seeking outside help. This is a move that the Trump administration promised us was going to happen, but it is still quite a shock to see them engage in this level of climate denial. Ring of Fire's Farron Cousins discusses this.

Transcript:

According to news reports and very cursory internet searches, the EPA has officially removed their websites from their official website talking about climate change. Now, this is not a surprising move. We knew back in April of 2017 that the EPA had issued this memo saying they were gonna, you know, tailor their websites to fit a little bit more in line with the new direction of the agency under Scott Pruitt. Pruitt may not be there anymore, but the anti-science mentality that he and Donald Trump brought to this administration is alive and well in today's EPA. And we see that because now we can't see websites related to climate change from the US government.

Now, this administration has taken a very unique approach to climate change. You know, we had the Bush administration, who most people don't even realize, they weren't outright climate change deniers. They said, "Yeah, it appears to be warming. We're not quite sure of what the cause is." They were deniers in that regard, but at least they acknowledged that yeah, things seem to be getting worse. And towards the end of his administration, they actually acknowledged that human beings were causing the problem. So, even somebody as anti-science and as dumb as George W. Bush, at least understood that this was a very real problem and we were making it worse, they just didn't care.

And then came the Trump administration after eight years of Obama, who says not only is climate change possibly a Chinese hoax, but we're going to get rid of any mention of it. We're going to do away with it. We're going to bury the science so that the American public can't find it. Because here's the thing, people are far more likely to believe something that comes from the federal government than they are something that comes from an independent study. Something that comes from a media outlet. They are going to believe the government over those places, so this could lead to a decrease in the number of people in the United States who believe and accept the science of climate change. Now that's a long shot, that likely won't happen, but it's something that absolutely could happen as a result of this.

But this administration has to understand something here. We've been given reports, several of them in just the last two months, showing that we are running out of time. If we do not reverse course, if we do not cut down on our emissions, we are going to hit a point of no return likely within the next 12 years, if not definitely within the next 22 years. At that point, it's all about mitigation instead of prevention. We have to adapt to the change in climate instead of trying to prevent the change in climate.

And at that point, catastrophe would have already happened. Massive droughts, massive floods, wildfires, hurricanes, extinction events. Those are the kinds of things that are right on the horizon. And this administration's response to it has been to cover it up, delete it, quite literally, and prevent the American public from knowing and understanding what is actually happening in the world today.

And more importantly, prevent people from seeing whether or not our government was even taking it seriously. But as we can see from the fact that they've deleted all of these websites, we know they're not taking it seriously. We know they don't believe in the science, we know that they've been purging scientists from the EPA. They've been replacing them with industry hacks, people from the chemical industry, the oil industry, all the industries that are polluting and

destroying our planet, they are now the ones calling the shots. And it's likely that they also played a role in convincing the administration to delete everything they had about the threats of climate change.

E&E News: Trump admin halts update to climate site

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060104991/search?keyword=epa>

Niina Heikkinen- Friday, November 2, 2018

EPA has stopped updating its climate change webpage, a new analysis has found.

The Environmental Data & Governance Initiative, which has been tracking changes to federal government webpages during the Trump administration, noticed new language on the agency website late last month.

Visitors to EPA's climate webpage no longer saw a notice on a new "splash page" telling them the site was being updated, which had been in place since April 2017.

"We are currently updating our website to reflect EPA's priorities under the leadership of President Trump and Administrator Pruitt," the notice had read.

Instead, starting Oct. 18, visitors to the page found a new message: "We want to help you find what you are looking for."

Also missing was a link to a press release discussing the agency's update to the climate change site, along with a direct link to a Jan. 19, 2017, snapshot of EPA's website preserved from the Obama administration. Visitors could, however, still access the older version of the website's homepage.

According to EDGI, the agency also deleted a link to a technical support request form.

"The cumulative effect of removing these links from the splash page is the substantial reduction of access to EPA's historical public information about climate change," EDGI wrote.

EPA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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